

Journal
of the
Child Welfare League
of America
Inc.

child welfare

July 1955

A Merger and What
Has Happened

A Merger and How
It Happened

Institutional Care - Past
and Present

CHILD WELFARE JOURNAL OF THE CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, Inc.

HENRIETTA L. GORDON, Editor

CHILD WELFARE is a forum for discussion in print of child welfare problems and the programs and skills needed to solve them. Endorsement does not necessarily go with the printing of opinions expressed over a signature.

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A MERGER AND WHAT HAS HAPPENED

Newell W. Ackerson

Executive Secretary
Child and Family Service of Sangamon
County
Springfield, Illinois

In this series of articles on merger, the authors will describe the process of effecting merger in their communities, and the problems or advantages resulting from it. Mr. Ackerson shows why program and services must be carefully determined before legal merger to avoid administrative difficulties and actual weakening of services.

IN SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, the legal merger of the Children's Service League, the Family Welfare Association, and the Springfield Day Nursery, serving a county area of 135,000 population, was effected on February 13, 1953. It was the result of planning and followed trends that evolved in the community over forty years. The merger of these agencies has been considered at three different times in the past thirteen years.

The parent organization of Child and Family Service was the Home for the Friendless chartered by a special act of the Illinois Legislature on Lincoln's Birthday in 1863. It changed its name to the Children's Service League in 1928. The Family Welfare Association was founded as the Associated Charities in 1888, and the Springfield Day Nursery was established in 1914.

When the merger took place, the family and children's agencies were conducting their programs in line with accepted practices of professional service: The Children's Service League had changed from an institutional program of child care to one providing foster home care, service to children in their own or relative's homes, adoption, service to unmarried mothers and a small study and treatment cottage. The day care service of the Springfield Day Nursery had been administered by the Children's Service League for several years although the Nursery had maintained its name and separate budget. The Family Welfare Association, after the depression, had gradually changed to a service program with real development of the professional family counseling service of good quality and standards after World War II. The family agency also offered protective services at the time of merger.

Strengthening Basic Services Primary

Two studies which provided information and recommendations that served as a basis for the 1953 merger were the Self-Survey of Family and Children's Services made in 1948 by the Council of Social Agencies and the Unification Committee merger study of 1949-50. The Self-Survey of the Family and Children's Services pointed up needs in the programs of family and children's services in the community and made a number of recommendations to strengthen these services,

strengthening the family service program; development of more adequate public and private welfare programs; extension of day care facilities; merger of the private, non-sectarian child welfare agencies; expansion of services to unmarried mothers; continued development of a child guidance clinic; strengthening the staffs of the agencies in the family and children's field through the development of job classifications, salary ranges and personnel practices.

Finally, the survey committee believed that the ultimate of a sound, efficient, inclusive and flexible private family and child welfare program would be a merged agency but thought that before this could be accomplished effectively and efficiently in Springfield, the basic services needed to be strengthened.

Slightly more than six months after the Self-Survey was completed, and before action on its recommendations had seriously begun, merger of the Family Welfare Association, the Children's Service League, the Springfield Day Nursery, and the Service Bureau for Colored Children was precipitated by the resignation of the Executive of the Children's Service League. A Unification Committee consisting of equal board representation from the agencies concerned was appointed to con-

sider merger. The Welfare Council was represented on the committee and one of its members served as chairman, but the Council was in no sense sponsor of the committee. Professional staff from the agencies, including the Council, served in an advisory capacity. The study was undertaken to determine whether a more effective service could be achieved through integration of the services offered the community by these agencies and also to ascertain whether economies would result.

The Unification Committee made an exhaustive study of all phases of agency administration, program and services.

An excerpt from the summary of the Unification Committee Report recommending merger is quoted as follows:

As committee members reviewed in detail the problems now facing each of the agencies, the fact was borne home more forcibly than most committee members had realized, how woefully inadequate is the service of all of them. If the agencies can be united into one group solidly backing the most important phase of community welfare work, it was felt that it would be in a stronger position than the separate agency to take its story to the community in a positive, public relations program and to the Community Chest. . . .

The Committee does not recommend merger as a means of reducing costs to the community. Budgets are so inadequate now that the community is not getting good service and probably does not realize how crippling the inadequate budgets of recent years have been. On the other hand, it is convinced that the dollar would go farther in a unified agency than as three separate agencies. . . . The Committee Study showed salary scales now provided are inadequate, each agency is under-staffed, new trained workers have been impossible to get at the salary levels offered. The Committee feels that a merger on the present combined budgets would so restrict the proposed unified agency that the merger could not be fairly judged. The community would expect . . . through merger alone . . . that needs would be met which are not even touched today. . . . More will be expected . . . and more must be provided.

The Unification Committee Report was approved by the Family Welfare Association in June, 1950. The Children's Agencies voted against the merger at that time, stating that merger was desirable but not feasible until the staffs of the agencies were strengthened, public child welfare services were developed to relieve the heavy child placing load car-

ried by the private children's agencies, and the principles of racial integration were more satisfactorily achieved.

Except for understanding and knowledge of the agencies' problems gained as a result of the study, the merger would have eventuated at this time. The Unification Committee study enabled enough of the Board Members to withstand the pressure from the Community Chest and the Chest Budget Committee. It also forestalled merger on a purely administrative level for a time and enabled the agencies to carry out some of the recommendations, particularly those relating to staff.

Agencies Unprepared For Merger

Merger discussion was again precipitated in late summer of 1952 when the Children's Service League case supervisor resigned. During the preceding two years some progress had been made in removing only one of the obstacles to merger—the area of strengthening staff. Personnel practices had been brought up-to-date, salary ranges with increments established, job descriptions developed, and the Children's Service League had inaugurated a scholarship program which was beginning to provide trained personnel. While the casework staff situation had improved, vacancies in both the Family Welfare Association and Children's Service League staffs, had to be filled.

The Service Bureau for Colored Children was invited to participate in merger discussions at this time, but they felt that the progress made in removing the obstacles to merger had been insufficient. The Family Welfare Association and the Children's Service League then proceeded with merger plans. The Family agency board was convinced that the merger of services was the most desirable structure for effectively providing family and children's services. They believed that more adequate funds would be available from the Chest if merger was effected. They also were concerned that administrative costs were too high for the amount of service given. The Children's Agency board also felt it would be unwise to delay action any longer.

The agencies had not been strengthened sufficiently to assure a successful merger but they questioned whether all of the factors could ever be made right for a sound merger. In view of the situation, the executives of the two agencies indicated their willingness to work toward an immediate merger provided it was approached on a sound basis with full support by both boards and with focus on improved social services to the community. Committees were appointed to work out a plan and executives of the agencies provided professional counsel. The Welfare Council did not participate in the study at this time.

Casework staff did not participate in the study primarily because of staff shortages. The executives felt justified in keeping staff on the job rather than cutting into already limited service by involving them in the merger study. However, staff in both agencies were carried along each step of the way and their thinking was incorporated as merger plans progressed.

The fact that the Children's Agency had no supervisor and five caseworkers while the Family agency had a supervisor with only one caseworker was one of the precipitating factors to a consideration of merger at this particular time.

Some of the main points necessary to cover prior to the completion of legal merger were:

1. Approval of a sound plan of organization;
2. Determination of the agency's program and staff needs to provide service;
3. Development of a single budget securing approval from the Chest;
4. Reviewing problems and procedures with the Court and other agencies;
5. Development of an office plan and Chest approval for alterations;
6. and plans for joint publicity to interpret to the community the goals of merger.

Unfortunately, only the first and last recommendations were carried out prior to legal merger. The Boards moved ahead quickly on working out the legal plan and effecting the legal merger. Other "details" it was felt could be worked out after the legal merger was completed.

The program of the merged agency has suffered because most of the recommendations were not satisfactorily worked out prior

to legal merger, services have been impaired and administrative problems have been almost insuperable. The agency has faced one budget crisis after another. This is not to say that had the agencies not merged that they would not have faced budget and other problems. It is believed, however, the merger has greatly accentuated these problems.

Benefits Impaired By Budget Cuts

Social planning and fund-raising have been carried on in separate agencies with separate boards and staffs since 1948. There was poor coordination and cooperation between these two important functions which had negative effects on the community's health and welfare services.

Prior to 1954, campaign goals had been set—not on what represented the minimum needs of the agencies but rather on what it was felt could be raised in the community, which was always a lower figure. When this goal was not reached, further reductions in agency budgets were necessary and the community was not aware of the serious effect this was having on agency services since campaign results and appropriations to agencies were not adequately publicized.

A budget for the merged agency was approved by the new board immediately after legal merger and submitted to the Community Chest with the request that agency representatives appear before the Budget Committee to explain revisions and adjustments. The Chest Budget Committee did not meet for several weeks and then was called on short notice. Agency representatives were not invited. Only minor adjustments in three or four salaries were approved. Shortly thereafter budgets for 1954 had to be submitted. Pre-campaign hearings were not held. The goal was set by roughly dividing what the agencies requested and what had been raised the previous year. Hearings were then conducted during the campaign when it was not known whether the goal would be reached or not.

The Chest appropriation in 1953 to the merged agency was over \$78,000, and had three staff vacancies been filled, the appro-

priation would have been over \$85,000. The merged agency budget for 1954 was cut to \$72,788. Not only were cuts made in items all along the line in the budget, but appropriations for vacant casework positions (which had in previous years been cut from the budget with the understanding the positions could be filled if workers could be employed) were out completely from the 1954 budget with the directive that the positions could not be filled.

Moreover, an effort was made to cut an employed case supervisor from the budget. The person filling this position had been the family supervisor, who in addition to supervisory responsibilities, had handled intake and carried a heavy caseload. Since the family counseling staff at this point consisted of this supervisor and a caseworker, discharging the supervisor would have meant cutting the family program in half and for all practical purposes eliminating it.

This posed a serious administrative problem. Family service at the time of merger was admittedly weak. Family Service staff should have been doubled or even tripled instead of cut in half. The administration had real conviction about the importance of family service and felt it unethical to merge these agencies with the larger agency taking over the endowment of the smaller agency and then drastically curtailing or eliminating the program of the smaller agency. Therefore Family Service staff was maintained while phases of the Children's Services were weakened. A Day Nursery teacher was cut from the budget, seriously handicapping the program of the Nursery, and weakening its services. Eliminating vacant casework positions weakened both major services.

Merger did not result in any substantial savings in administrative salaries or in other budget items. While one executive salary was eliminated, the salary of the executive of the merged agency was raised to compensate for increased responsibilities. The salaries of supervisory staff also were raised for the same reasons. One clerk-typist position was eliminated and other small reductions were made. The agency budgets before merger had been

minimum budgets making it almost impossible to find any item that could be reduced as a result of merger.

Combining budgets for three agencies can present special problems in relation to the Community Chest and also with the board and the community. In this merger the new budget for the three agencies represented from 20 to 25 per cent of the total campaign goal. It is easy to forget that the merged agency combined budgets of three previous agencies. Items in the separate agency budgets such as personnel, telephones, national dues, office supplies and others loom large when lumped together. It is also more difficult to separate costs and to explain the need for particular budget items.

The Chest campaign failure in the fall of 1953 brought about a reorganization in the central services agencies. The Executives of the Community Chest and Welfare Council both resigned in early 1954 and these agencies decided to merge.

A new executive was employed and the merged agency, effected in February, 1955, is known as United Community Services. Budgets of the agencies were reviewed with consideration being given to program and services as well as finances. The 1954 campaign goal more nearly reflected the actual needs of the agencies. Because of the changes in administration and other problems confronting the central services organization, the 1954 goal was not reached, but a little more was raised than in 1953. The appropriation from the central services organization this year is still below that of the first year of merger, there is greater confidence that the agency's needs will be more adequately met in the future because of better coordination between social planning and fundraising, improved public relations, and better teamwork between the agencies and the central services administration.

Interpreting Multiple Services to Board and Community

Since merger had been discussed for many years, board members were psychologically ready for merger. The Board of each agency

was equally represented on the board of the new agency. The children's agency board members were not concerned greatly because their budget and endowments were over five times larger than that of the family agency. The number of members on each board was the same and both boards had the same plan of rotation, so there were no intense loyalties by any board member to his own agency. There was no organized or strong opposition to merger.

One of the most difficult administrative problems in relation to the board of the merged agency has been orientation to the program of multiple services. "Family" board members have had difficulty understanding the specifics of children's services. It has also been difficult for the "children's" board members to understand the less tangible area of family counseling. While a study of program and services has been made by the Social Service Committee and other orientation plans have been used, the board itself this year has recognized the need for a more formalized program of orientation for new board members. The personnel committee in recent months has also developed a board members manual which should serve as a useful tool in acquainting new members with agency program.

Interpretation of the merged agency program is also a community problem. To acquaint the community with the agency services under the new agency name, we have developed a more aggressive community relations program. Films on foster care and family counseling have been secured. An attractive, colorful brochure has been developed and distributed. A newsletter to the membership has been started to keep members informed of agency program and needs.

An agency membership has been developed and the board has been enlarged. At the time of legal merger the new board consisted of 18 members or one-half of the total board representation of the separate agencies prior to merger. The professional staff recommendations were for a larger board and for a membership. After the drastic budget cut less than a year after merger, consideration was

given to these recommendations. The constitution was changed to provide for a membership who will elect new members to the board instead of the board electing its own members and the board was enlarged from 18 to 24 members. This year the merged agency will hold its first open annual meeting. The separate agencies had not had open annual meetings for years.

Staff Reorganization and Adjustment

The organizational plan as recommended called for a director of casework, two case supervisors, and nine caseworkers. The director of casework would carry over-all responsibility for the social service program of the agency and be responsible directly to the executive. We felt casework services would be better coordinated under this plan than having two supervisors, each being responsible to the executive. Our experience has confirmed the validity of this decision.

The case supervisors, one with experience in family counseling, and the other in child welfare, would be responsible for the supervision of three caseworkers each, a student and intake.

For the most part the professional and clerical staffs have integrated well. The staffs were prepared for and interested in merger. There was, however, a considerable feeling of insecurity developed within the staff as to what their status would be in the new agency—anxiety over who would be selected as the new executive, who would be their supervisor, and where they would fit into the new agency program.

The merging of clerical staff necessitated a re-assignment of duties and a division of labor. A new plan of statistical reporting for merged agencies had to be developed and decisions made on the re-organization of case records and files. Application blanks, face sheets, and many other forms had to be revised. The filing system was changed to correspond to the merged agency classification. The master file cards had to be combined. Naturally there was some confusion on the part of both professional and clerical staffs until the necessary changes could be worked out.

The problems of administration during the year from the time the children's supervisor resigned in the summer of 1952 until the director of casework arrived in June 1953 were extremely difficult for the Children's Agency Executive. When agencies are considering merger, it is difficult to recruit casework or supervisory staff, because applicants are reluctant to consider employment when the future status of the agency and also the applicant is undetermined.

In addition to the increased administrative responsibilities involved in merging the agencies, the Children's Agency Executive supervised five caseworkers. The casework staff in the Children's Agency had improved in quality but nearly all of the workers, although they had completed graduate training, had little experience. Supervision was essential and this was given priority. The merger study also placed additional responsibilities on the Family Agency Executive but to a lesser extent because the agency did have a supervisor. However, since the agency was small, all staff members including the Executive were overburdened with caseloads.

The Executive of the Children's Agency was appointed the Executive of the merged agency. A position of Assistant Executive was created for the Family Agency Executive who was asked to remain with the agency until a director of casework could be employed. Since the offices of the two agencies could not be consolidated and rearranged until plans and funds had been approved, the agencies were planning integration of staff and program but the services continued to operate separately.

Differentiated or Undifferentiated Caseloads

In earlier discussions of merger in 1949 and then again to a lesser extent in 1952, there was a general consensus that initially after merger caseworkers would need to provide service in their area of specialization, but as the workers became more experienced they would carry undifferentiated caseloads. Board members had a tendency to believe that professional training would provide a

worker with skill to handle any kind of situation.

While two years is a rather short period to evaluate the question, we have come to the conclusion that even the most experienced workers find it difficult to handle completely undifferentiated loads. Part of this may be due to the fact that until recently agencies and schools have not always thought and taught as generically as we may eventually be able to do. Workers do gain skill in certain areas from dealing with similar aspects of casework for a long time.

While we recognize that the understanding of human behavior should be applicable alike to working with parents or children in a family setting, or in a foster care setting, or with foster parents, or adoptive parents, or with housemothers, or day nursery teachers, we have found that the adaptation of knowledge to those various aspects of family and child welfare require experience. The lack of structure such as is found in placement in children's agencies left workers who had had experience only in a placement agency floundering when they were given the responsibility for family counseling. Family agency workers had to learn to take more direct responsibility for children in placement and how to work with young children who expressed themselves through behavior rather than through speech. The family worker had to learn to evaluate foster homes in terms of the child's need and to work with the trio—child, foster parents and own parents. Dealing with more of the authoritative aspects so obvious in protective services has been difficult for both family and child welfare workers.

In the months immediately following merger, workers continued in the area in which they had previously worked, while through staff meetings and case discussions they became acquainted with casework in all areas of service and defined similarities and differences in focus and emphasis. Some of the workers were anxious to try out new areas of experience. Others were fearful and reluctant.

Intake was assigned on an undifferentiated basis to two skilled, experienced workers. At

the point of initial contact, it is often impossible to tell what the real needs are and only after the initial period of exploration can the caseworker determine whether placement of the child or family counseling is needed. Through undifferentiated intake, we have felt that it has been easier to offer a service focused on determining the needs rather than upon a specific service. We have, however, had workers assigned specifically to adoption and foster home applications and studies because it has seemed to us that in this way the clients needing these services get more adequate and prompt attention.

From the community standpoint, we believe there is this distinct advantage in merger—referrals are made more easily. A community needs to learn of only one agency to whom referral should be made and it then becomes the agency's responsibility to determine what service should be given.

Other Merger Problems

One of the recommendations of the executives was that policies and procedures in relation to the Court and the other agencies be worked out prior to legal merger. Both agencies worked closely with the Court but provided services in different areas of specialization. It seemed appropriate to bring the Court into the agency's planning for merger, to discuss program and problems, and to develop policies and procedures cooperatively. While the relationship between the Court and the agency is good, administratively and from the standpoint of providing better service to clients, it would have been more satisfactory to have had joint planning and to have reached mutual decisions prior to legal merger.

It is important for the merging agencies to be physically united to provide good communications. Although the agencies were in the same building across the hall from each other, it was not possible physically to unite the services until alterations in office space had been made. If the plans had been approved and funds appropriated from the Chest prior to effecting the legal merger, the offices might have been physically united

within a month after merger. Since these plans had not been approved, much time was consumed in interpreting the need for alterations to the Chest and getting the necessary funds. Consequently, the agencies were not physically joined until more than six months after the merger had taken place.

Summary

Merger of family and children's agencies is sound and makes sense from an administrative point of view. Some specialization, however, is essential in the staff organizational plan. Program, personnel, budget, function in relation to other agencies and other plans need to be worked out carefully before the legal merger is effected. Only with adequate personnel and adequate financing can merger be successful and service to clients improved.

Mergers sometimes result in a decrease in the number of members serving on the separate agency boards. This is often necessary because otherwise the merged board would be too large, but care should be exercised that the reduction is not too great. A cut in the number of lay people actively working with the agency and familiar with its program can be a serious handicap in community relations and interpretation. This problem can be corrected to some extent by increasing the number on the board and by developing a membership plan so that community individuals interested in the agency and its program have a way of keeping in touch with agency needs and services.

Cooperation and teamwork between the executives of agencies considering a merger is not just an important factor but a "must" in determining whether a merger will evolve smoothly or with difficulty. On the part of the executives, there must be a total disregard of self and concern about status, and ability and willingness to focus on what is best for the program and services to the exclusion of any concern or consideration of what the outcome will be for them. The executives must be sufficiently mature and secure to help board members give up their loyalties to their respective executives and transfer their loyalties to the merged agency

in full measure. It cannot be assumed that professional training and experience will assure professional attitudes and feelings that are necessary to accomplish the relationship and teamwork that were present in the Springfield merger. The quality of leadership given by the executives of the separate agencies made an extremely difficult task much more smooth in every way and was one of the important factors in helping the members of the separate boards to integrate quickly and cooperatively into one board responsible for a multi-function program. Similarly study of merger in years previous plus community survey reports and social planning activity assisted immeasurably in working out problems and plans both before and after merger.

Improved services to clients or even maintaining the status quo is seriously handicapped when there is lack of coordination in central services between fund-raising and social planning.

To be successful, a merger should be based on careful analysis of total agency needs and administrative plans rather than on expediency or the desire to save money. Mergers do not save money through reduction of administrative personnel. They may result in allocation of the budget along different lines for better coordination, but the total amount of money necessary is not reduced if services are to be maintained. Forcing a merger in order to save money during a financial crisis is a certain bid for reduction of service rather than the maintenance or expansion of existing services. Likewise a merger of expediency because of staff shortages does not add additional staff time to that already available. Merger of family and children's agencies with admitted weaknesses has not resulted in making one strong agency.

While Child and Family Service of Sangamon County in its merger has had to deal with many problems over and above the problems normally confronting any merger, complicated and serious as these may be, we feel the merger can be successful and social services to those who need them strengthened if the agency board has conviction and concern in meeting agency problems and provided the agency receives adequate financial support.

NEW LEAGUE BOARD MEMBERS

The Child Welfare League of America welcomes the members elected to its Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting held in San Francisco, California, on Friday, June 3, 1955:

Judge Jane M. Bolin, Judge, Domestic Relations Court, New York City, is a former board member, New York City Urban League, Vice-President Wiltwyck School, on the board of Dalton School, and a member of the New York City Commission on Children.

Mrs. Sara Ricks Caldwell, Chief, Social Administration, State Department of Public Welfare, Jackson, Mississippi, was formerly director of the Child Welfare Division in that state.

Dr. Martha M. Eliot, Chief, U. S. Children's Bureau, was formerly Chief of the World Health Organization.

Mr. Clyde Getz is Executive Director of the Children's Home Society of California, Los Angeles.

Mrs. Kate B. Holms was formerly Chief, Child Welfare Division of South Carolina State Department of Public Welfare. She has been on board of trustees of the Connie Maxwell Orphanage, Greenwood, and she and her husband, a prominent Baptist minister in Columbia, have statewide reputations.

Judge Harry V. Lindemann, Juvenile Court Judge of Essex County, New Jersey, has for many years worked for better agency resources for children in New Jersey. He served on National Committee organized by the American Humane Society to define protective services for children.

Mr. Jack N. Pritzker is on the board of the Psychosomatic Unit of the Michael Reese Hospital and is vice-president of the Jewish Children's Bureau of Chicago. He served as Lieutenant Commander in the Navy during the war and is on the board of Cory Corporation as well as a number of others.

Mr. John G. Theban is Executive Secretary, Family and Child Services of Washington, D. C.

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A MERGER AND HOW IT HAPPENED

Howard Hush
Executive Director
Family and Children's Service
Association
Dayton, Ohio

Mr. Hush discusses the merging of two strong and equal agencies in a community where Chest, Board and staff were prepared to cope with the problems involved in the process.

ON MARCH 31, 1953, the legal formalities were completed for the merger of the Family Service of Montgomery County, Dayton, Ohio, and the Children's Bureau of Dayton. From this date on the services of these two agencies were to be continued under the name of Family and Children's Service Association, with one board, one executive, one staff, one budget, one bookkeeping system, one statistical plan and one administratively integrated program of casework service for families and children.

The merger had followed a six-month review of the question of consolidating these two agencies. The study was conducted by the Merger Study Committee, consisting of six board members (three each from the former separate agencies) and three individuals representing the community. Within the six-month time limit, the Committee discussed all aspects of the question of merger, and got information and viewpoints from many sources before making a final recommendation.

Each formal step was taken by unanimous vote, including the actions taken by the separate boards before the Merger Study Committee was appointed; by the Merger Study Committee itself; and by the separate boards in their actions upon the report of the Committee.

The combination brought together an approved gross budget of about \$250,000, professional staff positions of 24, and a total staff of about 35. It brought together, also, four major services: family counseling, adoption, foster care and homemaker.

The two agencies were well known and established in the community. Their services had shifted and changed over the years, but they extended back to 1896 in the case of one

agency and to 1924 in the other. They had received two of the largest Community Chest allocations. The size of the budgets and the kind of leadership which these two agencies had had over the years gave each a firm place in the community; nevertheless, within a six-month-period they ceased to exist as two separate agencies.

Urgent Circumstance Precipitated Merger

A merger of two agencies is probably never really planned in the sense that a group of people begin with a leisurely consideration of the idea of merger, and then work it out in a careful, logical fashion. On the other hand it is perhaps just as true that mergers do not just happen. There is frequently a precipitating, often urgent, circumstance for the question to be considered. Without such a circumstance, a community may never really take time to consider carefully whether it can be served best by separate agencies or a combined agency.

The specific circumstance in Dayton and Montgomery County was the fact that both agencies at the same time were without active executives. One was awaiting the arrival of a new executive following the previous executive's resignation several months earlier. The other was left without an executive because after sudden and prolonged illness, he resigned during a period of many staff vacancies. The board understood the very great urgency for filling the vacancy immediately, and, if there were to be merger, they wanted to arrive at an early decision. As it worked out, with the approval of both boards, the executive of the other agency, after assuming his position, also served on a half-time basis as acting executive of the

second agency for the period of the merger study.

Moreover, for specific and tangible reasons, the atmosphere seemed right for considering the merger question. In the first place, there had been some discussion of the question on two other occasions during the preceding ten years, so the idea of merger was not new. Furthermore, there was evidence of lingering disappointment and dissatisfaction in the community over the earlier reviews of the question. It was not so much a concern over the decisions not to merge; rather, it was a feeling that conditions had never been right for a considered and unbiased appraisal of the matter. The time seemed ripe for such opportunity. Also the two agencies had about the same size staff; the net operating budgets were approximately the same, as were the Community Chest allocations; the two caseloads were about equal in size, though different statistical procedures were used; the two agencies served the same geographical area; they had the same casework orientation and were striving toward the same professional standards; although both had fallen short of the ideal because of the scarcity of qualified personnel. All these factors tended to minimize the concern either agency could have about being swallowed by the other.

There was some duplication of service, but nobody knew how much. The "children's" agency was more and more relating its services to the whole family; and the "family" agency was doing more and more in direct service to children. Clearly there would not have been a merger at this time had it not been for the sudden loss of an agency executive. But neither would there have been a merger had there not been a movement in that direction for several years.

An Inter-Agency Project

The question was first approached in a meeting of the executive committees of the two agencies, called jointly by the president of the Community Chest and the president

of the Community Welfare Council. It was not a pressure move; rather, an informal gesture from neutral, but interested, quarters. The purpose was to bring the representatives of the two agencies together, not to decide upon merger, but whether or not they thought it desirable and timely to take a serious look at the question.

Out of this discussion came agreement to go ahead. After appropriate action by each of the two boards, the Merger Study Committee was set up. The presidents of the two boards served ex-officio on the Committee. The chairman, elected by the Committee at its first meeting, was a local businessman and former president of the Community Welfare Council. The executive of the Community Welfare Council served as a consultant and secretary to the Committee. He served, however, as an individual and not as a representative of the Community Welfare Council, since officially this was not a Council project. Meeting with the Committee, and also serving in a consultant capacity, was the executive of the one agency, who was also the acting executive of the other agency.

The Merger Study Committee thought that its final recommendations should be submitted to the Boards of Trustees of the two agencies, and that the ultimate decision would rest with them (technically, however, with the Members, and not the Trustees). To the members of the Committee, it seemed sound to view this basically as an inter-agency decision: first, because of the urgency for a decision; second, because the question was whether or not to merge two agencies, and not one of basic change in services affecting other community agencies.

The final 19-page report of the Merger Study Committee was, therefore, submitted directly to the two Boards of Trustees. By their separate actions they took the necessary steps leading to the merger. Later, the merger action was approved by the Community Chest and Community Welfare Council enabling the new agency to meet the technicalities of membership.

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Corporate Change, A Board Responsibility

Throughout the study, the question of combined or separate agencies was seen as involving primarily Board responsibility and decision, because the question was not whether specific services should be added or removed, or of imposing the standards or philosophy of one agency on the other, but whether or not a corporate change from two separate agencies to one larger agency was in the interest of achieving this objective. The Boards, assuming that they understood the general services and broad purposes of the agencies, could bring greater perspective and detachment, as well as a longer and deeper identification with both agencies and the community, than could staff. The Merger Study Committee, and the Boards of Trustees, were of the opinion that there was not sufficient professional experience and maturity, nor continuity of interest in agency and community, to have expected major and constructive thinking of the staff as a whole on the question of merger. The two agencies had 22 budgeted full-time professional positions; however, only one staff member had been employed as long as three years after completing professional training. Eight staff members had been employed less than two years, and most of them were without previous experience, or just beginning their professional careers; there were five staff vacancies.

Staff had no formal representation on the Merger Study Committee. The Presidents of the two agencies met with their respective staffs and announced that the merger question was to be reviewed; however, staff points of view were brought to bear upon certain aspects of the question through the regular administrative channels and reported to the Committee. The President of the new agency met with the total staff and reported upon the final recommendations and action.

Decision Made By Local Groups

The "guiding hand" at all times was to be the Merger Study Committee. While it drew

upon various local and national sources for information and points of view, the objective was to have the final report and recommendation represent the maximum participation and backing of the local community. There were perhaps several reasons for this approach.

There had been some previous review of the question by individuals from outside the community. Whether the previous decisions against merger were wise, the present feeling was that the question could not be resolved until the two boards considered the proposed action fully and arrived at their own conclusions. If the merger was not indicated, then the executive vacancy needed to be filled quickly so that the agency program would not suffer.

Perhaps the real basis for the wish to have this primarily a local review was the generally good feeling and positive attitude about the merger study: there seemed to be no axes to grind; there were no major points on which controversy was inevitable; there was a wholesome, but not exaggerated, concern about the special interests of one agency which had some endowment funds while the other had none.

Although there was strong disposition to prepare the final report and recommendation within the Merger Study Committee, one of its main activities was gathering facts and opinion from outside. The Committee held discussions with other local agencies, including the courts, closely associated with the services of the separate agencies and contacted by letter 35 comparable communities in which mergers had been considered or effected. A summary of these inquiries was made a part of the final report. In addition, the point of view on the operation of combined services was obtained from an executive of a merged agency in a community of comparable size, and advice was sought by correspondence from The Family Service Association of America and the Child Welfare League of America. Thus the Merger Study Committee got information and points of view from a wide variety of sources to pro-

vide the firmest possible basis for its final recommendation.

While the ultimate decision rested with the two Boards, the Committee's final report included professional considerations, based upon the interviews with the professional staffs of the local clinics and courts, and upon reports from the outside communities and the two national organizations. Furthermore, the consultant and secretary of the Merger Committee was the executive of the Community Welfare Council who had a solid professional background in both casework and community organization.

The final report listed the reasons for and against merger. Some of the points had to do with the community and public relations aspects of the question; but many of the points had the focus upon the direct service to clients. To illustrate, one of the points covered was how can the client always know whether he has a "family" problem or a "children's" problem? Presumably the intake process provides some clarification of problem and request for service. Then what happens to the client if he has gone through this process and finds he is at the wrong agency? Is he "lost"? Does he actually go to another agency for the same procedure? Meanwhile, what happens to the referral sources? How do they know what is a "family" problem or a "children's" problem?

Focus On Service To Community

The Committee was in the happy circumstance of being able to focus almost exclusively upon the single question of merger, and the determination in its final recommendation as to whether the community could best be served by one agency or by two separate agencies.

The only "pressure" factor the Committee had to face was the six-month-time limit on the study, necessitated by the need to have the administrative leadership clarified in one of the agencies. The make-up of the Committee provided a balanced point of view between such detachment, on the one hand, as to have almost indifference to the services of

their agencies, and such long and close identification on the other hand, as to resist any kind of change.

There was no pressure to merge just to save money. The Dayton Community Chest allocation for 1954 to the combined agency was larger than it had been to the separate agencies in previous years. Furthermore, the Chest quite likely would have granted the full request for 1954 but for the obvious fact that a \$5000 reduction could not affect operations in view of staff vacancies. To be sure, there will be savings of about \$10,000 a year in salaries now that agencies will be housed together in recently completed modern offices. These savings, however, were anticipated by the agencies themselves, and planned by the new agency, not imposed by the Chest.

Neither agency was in the position of using the proposed merger as a means of removing an undesirable executive or board member; nor was either agency so lacking in status, leadership, program or quality of service that it needed to be "saved" by the other.

Maintaining Specific Services

If there were to be merger, would all the specific and special services in the separate agencies be preserved in a combined service?

This is often the number one question, and it is only natural and understandable that this should be so. Board and staff may be on either, or both, sides of this question. In general, however, I suspect, that for obvious and often good reasons, the staff is more often on the side of holding back because of their natural anxiety about their personal future in a merged agency. Whether it is with board or staff, or both, the anxiety arises from the obvious fact that in a merger the ultimate control is turned over to a new group, or at least shared with newcomers.

The two local boards and the Merger Study Committee attempted to meet this general question and the emotions which often accompany it in three different ways: first, in the preparation of a proposed Code of Regulations for adoption by the combined

agency. In fact, it was actually a committee. Thus, there was a framework for the separation of the new agency, 24 and have a position chosen for the boards and leadership. One with experience in the position of children's community.

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agency. In its final form, it represented basically a combination of the separate codes. Thus, there was at least the permissive legal framework for continuing all the services of the separate agencies. Second, through the joint nominating committee and the selection of the new board. This was to be a board of 24 and have in the beginning equal representation chosen from the two former 18 member boards. Third, in the choice of staff leadership. The executive position went to one with experience in both the family and children's field, but with a weighting of experience in the family service field, whereas the position of director of casework went to one with a weighting of experience in the children's field. Both were new in the community.

Maybe it is more important, however, to ask whether or not this matter of "preserving" services is relevant to a merger decision. Perhaps merger only brings into focus questions about services which should have been asked twenty years or thirty years earlier.

Does it follow that just because there has been a specific agency service for thirty years that it should go on in the same way forever? How does a board in any agency, merged or "unmerged," know whether or not the services are attuned to community needs and carried on with good standards? These are important questions. It is too bad if they never get asked—and worse if the failure to ask such questions periodically serves only to develop defensiveness in the agency. In any event, although these questions arise in one form or another when merger is under consideration, they are only indirectly related to the question. A board which is not actively concerned with agency program is in no position to make an intelligent decision either on merger, or anything else. Likewise, if a staff is chiefly concerned with preserving the status quo, it, too, lacks the perspective and competence to plan constructively for the community it serves.

Thus, a focus upon "preserving" services is too narrow in any review or major change in services.

Preserving Specialization

One of the common concerns has to do with the question of "specialization" or "special" services. Not infrequently the concern represents the opposition to merger. And it is perhaps most often one of the primary concerns of children's agencies. On the other hand, family agency people often seem unconcerned about the question. I suspect, when this is so, that they have either had little experience with the "specialized" services, or they are not fully cognizant of the degree of specialization in family agency services.

The question seems to arise from confusion about what is specialization, a confusion which encourages much of the board member and community interest in merger. A very practical question, for example, in this particular merger, from a board member's standpoint was, "If children's agencies are interested in specialization, and yet actively concerned with the whole family in planning for a particular child, then where is the specialization?"

Family agencies, on the other hand, while minimizing specialization, commonly assign cases and weight caseloads on the basis of the special skills and interests of staff members—some with marital problems, some with adolescent boys, some with preschool children and so on. If we assume that the special skills and interests of staff, and the focus of the service, represent some of the components of a specialization in the casework field, then the question about specialization loses some of its compelling relevance to merger. From a board member's point of view there is at least a degree of specialization in most family and children's services whether combined or separate.

The Committee had to content itself with the conclusion that it was administratively possible to provide for necessary specialization within a combined agency. In fact, the point of view was expressed that a combination might even put some accent upon specialization; and that basically it was a choice between specialization in a larger agency and completely separate agencies.

The Merger Study Committee and the two boards were fully aware that the ultimate decision about the merger would not be made without taking a general look at the services as then established. This was done in part through having each agency submit a brief history, a statement of services, and service figures, for the previous year. The Committee reviewed these statements very carefully. In addition, the replies to inquiries sent to comparable communities, and to the two national organizations provided added perspective.

Locally this review and the final decision opened the way ultimately for a reconsideration of certain policies and procedures, many of them related to what have been traditionally regarded as child welfare services. To illustrate, a part-time psychologist was employed—partly to provide a more integrated service, but primarily to bring emphasis upon earlier adoption placements. A limited use of surrenders was put into effect, the agency having been one of the few nonsecular agencies, if not the only one, in the state which made no use of this procedure.

Later, salary ranges were reviewed resulting in very substantial improvements to give the new agency the strongest possible staff. A very considerable amount of general office reequipping is being done. The merger may also have affected the timing of a new community services building. With the community interest in the merger, it was easier to move along with the capital fund drive and plans for such a building. Probably every organization needs a kind of reevaluation or reshuffling now and then. In this community, the decision to consider merger provided an excellent opportunity for a review, and the result and action taken should accrue to the benefit of the casework services in the years ahead.

Conclusion

It is impossible to know all the factors which had a part in this merger working out as it did. The decision, however, has on the whole been very well received among other

community agencies, in the Community Chest relationship, in the press and by the public at large—to the extent that the public's views can be registered. To board and community people interested in the merger, it "made sense." Although there are differences of opinion about merger, particularly among professional people, there was no strong evidence presented in this community to suggest that a combination could not be just as effective in its casework services as two separate agencies. A great many people felt the services could and should be more effective ultimately.

Much has been done to integrate the services. Actually, however, to some extent the operations remained separate until common housing was achieved. Now is the time for a more intensive review of the internal operations. With the number of mergers over the country in the past 15 years, we will not be without opportunity to draw upon the experience of others.

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REFLECTIONS ON INSTITUTIONAL CARE—PAST AND PRESENT

Paul Warren

Chicago, Illinois

Reviewing on his own experience twenty years ago, the author, "an institutional graduate," views with poignant clarity the progress made in institutional care and points up the immensity of the job that remains to be done.

FIRST OF ALL I want to thank you. I owe far more to child welfare workers, to the work that you do, than I can ever repay and it is impossible for me to express to you with words my very deep feelings of gratitude. Several times during a long and damaging career as a rebel without a cause I was offered help from people like you. And because at times those offers were obscured, were difficult for me to accept, at times impossible to recognize, I realize how hard your jobs have been. I know how much courage and plodding hard work it must have taken to arrive at your present stage of accomplishment, how thankless it must have seemed. It must cause you aggravation when well-meaning people, looking for results overnight, lift their arms and wail when what is needed above all is patience. So I would like to tell you how those offers of help bore fruit years after they were made. I would also like to give you my impressions of the many changes that have taken place in the treatment of children in the years since I first became a ward of one of the institutions.

Some Reached Out to Me

Not long ago I went to the Juvenile Detention Home where I had been an inmate twenty-one years ago. All the way out there those feelings I had then came back to me, the old fears, despairs and insecurities. But at the end of the day, on my way home, I was engulfed in a warm feeling of gratitude and hope. The old bitterness that at one time seemed my only protection gave way to the smaller but more gratifying memories.

Delivered at the Ninth Annual Statewide Institute of Children's Institutions, Chicago, Illinois, March 15, 1955.

I remembered a social worker who used to take me twice a week to see the psychiatrist at the Institute for Juvenile Research. I realize now how difficult it must have been for him, as it was for me, to communicate. He seemed to me just another member of the not-understanding world of grown ups, as my father was, or—like the guards who tormented me—connected in some way to the Juvenile Home. We would ride the streetcar together, but I was not handcuffed and many times during those rides I would look toward the rear platform—the doorless entrance—and would have to force myself not to run. I had twice tried to escape from the Home and there I was with a golden opportunity and I did not take it. I never asked myself why. A question like that would have demanded more questions than I was prepared to answer. He could have made it easier for himself by handcuffing me, but he did not.

One day as we passed some huge billboards advertising the coming of a circus he asked me if I liked circuses and I said I had never been to one. He seemed so sad when I told him this that I thought I had hurt him and I tried my best to make him feel better about it. He promised me that he would take me to the circus and that I would eat cotton candy and see the clowns and the aerialists and everything. Lord, how happy I was! The poor food, the strict rules, the seemingly endless torturing by the other boys and some attendants, the terrifying feelings of my position as a rejected child (my mother and father had me committed to the Home because they thought it would be good for me), a weak and evil child waiting for my punishment, all these things lost some of their terror because this man, this grown-up liked me enough, in spite of all, to take me to the circus.

He never did take me to the circus. Everytime I saw him after that I felt his frustrations and I would prattle away in a mad effort to make him see that I did not mind too much. Oh, I was disappointed but the mere offer and the feeling behind it was enough. I knew that he liked me and I did not want him to suffer because for some reason he could not live up to his promise.

Treatment Was Scorned

In those days he was one of a small group of men and women who were, at most, merely tolerated by the authorities. For years after I heard of social workers, lumped together with psychologists, sociologists and psychiatrists, called "bug doctors." I wonder if you can visualize the contempt with which this term was applied. I must confess that I went along with this derision as did the other inmates of the various institutions in which I have been confined. But there did come times when I remembered this social worker and those rides on the streetcar and I would feel good.

The psychiatrist was one of those "bug doctors" too. Before each visit I would be told what to say to him and how to act by the older boys in the Home and by a guard who would use his fists one moment and a heavy handed condescending advice the next. I would be questioned on my return from the doctor and I found myself lying about what I had said and what the doctor had said. Again I felt that I had to protect a friend. This psychiatrist was the first man to make me feel that I was somebody, that I was not the stupid fool my father insisted I was and that I believed I was. But perhaps greater than this, he tried to take from me the awful burden of guilt. I went to see him many times after I decided to allow my parents to take me from the Home. Then he saw them and they refused me permission to see him again. He was an atheist, they said, a Jew. I never really knew what it was they said to him or what he said to them. All I knew was that I had lost a friend. So I left home and returned voluntarily to the Juvenile Home

and asked for him to be notified. He tried, with my social worker to find a foster home for me and while they tried they had me accepted at Arden Shore Camp in Lake Bluff for the winter.

A Brief Interlude of Kindness

This is where I want to say some things about the "mothers" that are at Arden Shore. The housemother to all of us kids at that camp was a large woman with a great deal of warmth and understanding. When I think of her now I see that broad bosom and feel again those arms that comforted me when I had my glasses broken in a fight with some boys. I went there from the Juvenile Detention Home expecting another such cold and friendless institution. I was rigid in my refusal to accept anything from anybody, and felt that the boys who accepted things were all sissies. There was a scoutmaster, a college student and a nurse. They taught school and showed me that there were grown-ups in the world that did not hate and were not afraid to love. They made me feel that I had something to offer, that there were ways to get what I wanted besides through deceit and stealth. But mostly it was the camp mother that made it possible for me to relax my vigilance for awhile and to begin to open up.

But camp lasted only a short six months and again I was home with my parents who could not show affection because I suppose they had little shown them. Arden Shore and the housemother and the wonderful times I had there were soon forgotten. My psychiatrist tried to work out something but I lost patience and ran away from home again.

When a boy runs away from home, from his parents, it is a move of desperation. Whatever it is that he wanted from his parents—and this he is never quite sure of—has been harshly proven impossible to get from them. He looks anxiously for that something outside and he becomes satisfied with the next best thing. I found some of what I wanted from the neighborhood gang and my status as an ex-inmate of the Juvenile Home

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was my passport. I defended these friends with the ferocity that I had once defended the "bug doctors."

The rest of my story has to do with the older children's institutions—the prisons whose bars helped me prove that I was right in the first place, that grown-ups were against me, that I had a right to behave the way I did. But that is a long story and I have written it all down and perhaps some of you have read *Next Time Is For Life*.^{*} I would rather give you some of my impressions of the changes that have taken place in the attitude toward the unwanted, unloved child.

Contrasting the Past and Present

What I have seen and heard at the few institutions I have visited recently have made me realize that, beyond greater physical comfort, better medical care and better trained staff, there is much more understanding care and love given these children than there was in the old days. The "bug doctors" have won many battles.

I talked with the superintendent at the Arthur J. Audy Home and with the supervisor of Intake and was greatly impressed with their courage, their seemingly inexhaustible supply of energy, the tasks they set themselves, the struggles they still face. Above all, the thing that impressed me most was that the people in charge of this home know how hurt children are just by being sent to an institution. This knowledge is the first great step toward helping their charges.

When I was an inmate there the halls were gloomy and the paint was dark. Now there are fluorescent lights and cheerful colors. If you could have lived with those halls as I did, you would know that this is not the little thing it may seem to be. I remember sitting with other children on long benches in the dining room, looking down at my plate of porridge, waiting for the bell to tell us that it was all right to eat. Before us was a table where the superintendent and his guards sat and we could all see and smell their food. Grapefruit, eggs and bacon, toast,

coffee and dessert seemed so delicious compared to the food we had before us. This difference allowed us to go on cherishing the hatred we shared and directed toward all authority. Food can become so important. I went round with the present superintendent and saw what his boys ate. It was the same food that he and I shared with some of his aides. It was good food, prepared in a kitchen that was spotlessly clean and run by trained people who must know how important a tasty meal can be to a child who feels the great void within him because he is there.

I was shown the new additions to the building, the modern and cheery classrooms and I remembered the old portable school rooms that used to line the wooden fence that separated the boys from the girls in the yard. I saw that yard, the horseshoe pitching court, the softball diamonds, the basketball courts. I recalled an afternoon of play in that same yard twenty years ago when it was just a barren stretch of ground. Children from all three floors of the institution were emptied into that area at once and we ran, screaming and kicking our way out. The gym instructor emerged with several guards and he would stand there surveying the scene. Under one arm was a basketball and under the other was a baseball. In his hand he carried a bat. He blew his whistle and we all waited like animals let loose after being penned up too long. Then, one at a time he tossed the sporting objects to us and we fought like dogs for their possession. The men stood around watching, and it seemed to me that they enjoyed the sight. How much has happened, I thought as I stood with the superintendent in that yard, how much struggle there must have been—and thankless too—to bring about the changes.

He took me to the basement where I used to work at the mangle in the laundry under the careful watch of a crotchety old man. It was a hot and dark place filled with the strangling odors of steam and soap and sweat and we worked hard and silently with one thought in mind, "Keep on hating but don't let it show because you won't get your beans come lunch time." It was hard to remember

^{*} Paul Warren, *Next Time Is For Life*. New York, Dell Publishing Company, 1953.

such a scene as I stood talking to this pleasant young man in the light and clean place the basement is today.

It was hard to remember the gymnasium, the mats and the fights I felt forced into by the gym instructor, the awful fear of having to hit another boy and be hit by him, the horror of realizing that these people who were strangers to me could show such violence of anger. All this was history when I saw the boys playing volley ball in the new gymnasium under the helpful instruction of a pleasant-looking teacher. The boys were smiling.

Even the clothes are different. When I was in the institution, the boys wore ill fitting well worn and patched uniforms of some brown material and the girls wore dresses that looked like sacks tied at the middle. Boys now wear "tee" shirts of various colors, blue denim pants; they looked neat and clean. The girls have several different dresses, including a party dress and a gym suit. How good it is to know that people now realize how important little things can become when the big thing is missing.

Much Uncertainty Has Been Removed

The Intake department is something new to me and this is probably one of the most important of the new features. Twenty years ago there was little attempt to differentiate the abandoned from the delinquent, the passive from the aggressive, the younger child from the older. I was a runaway, but my first real lessons in crime were learned there by just listening to others that had stolen cars, held up shopkeepers, burglarized homes and even killed. So, lumped together, we spent our time in our dejection trying to find out what was now going to happen; when, if at all, we would be tried and what the results of that trial would mean in terms of more time spent in another jail. One of the most harmful aspects of an indeterminate sentence in a prison is the uncertainty, the not knowing for a year just how many more are to be spent in confinement. But to children it was a shattering blow, one that led to despair, to

withdrawal from any person representing authority, even from the few who were genuinely interested. They lost faith, the first step toward aggressive delinquency. Intake has removed these doubts. You all know how it works, the urgency with which child welfare workers speed the process of getting children that need not be placed in the Home into foster homes, back to their parents, or other institutions. The child is not sent into the Home until he can be told that on such and such a date his fate will be known and the possibilities are explained. This is a tremendous step to me, one of the greatest improvements over the situation of twenty years ago.

Improvements Are Still Needed

Of course there are many other changes that have taken place that began with the late Arthur J. Audy and are continued under the present administration. There are also changes that could take place, that are being fought for, changes that will depend upon a change in attitude of every one in our society. I was shocked to hear the name of one of the attendants at the Home. As I stood in that same playroom on the third floor, noting scars on the same old wooden benches that lined its walls, the sidelong looks of boys around me, I cringed when I heard that name. Because that same man had beaten me with his fists and had thrown me, unconscious and bloody into the solitary confinement cell known as "Blackstone" to spend a week on bread and water. That man is still working as an attendant. I don't know what he is like today but I knew what he was like then. Politicians still send men and women to work as attendants to disturbed children for favors received. Is it too much to hope that there will be a day when the men and women who work in these very important jobs will all love their work, and really care what happens to their wards? The superintendent has a big job on his hands, big because he takes such an interest in his children. Is it necessary that he work for longer than he should, and be forced to spy on some of his staff who

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received their jobs through the spoils system —through someone who neither knows or cares what happens to these children? He has fired many of these people who were ill equipped both by temperament and training for the job. One, he tells me, had to be charged with a crime before he could be removed because of his Civil Service status. I'm sure Civil Service was not intended to protect such people, but sometimes it does.

I am greatly disturbed by this and the knowledge that the State's Attorney's Office is represented at the Family Court, bringing a hostile attitude and preaching the "woodshed" theory. Are we still consumed with the desire for revenge? Haven't we learned that retaliation does not work, that punishment has never been reformatory? Both the sending of men and women to work as attendants by politicians and the new harsh policies of the State's Attorney's Office interferes with the treatment program. But I don't believe any court or institution should be controlled in any way by politicians so I suppose I am considered a starry-eyed Utopia seeker.

The Treatment Center

There are also private institutions that are doing such wonderful work and I wish there were hundreds of such places instead of just handfuls. Ridge Farm is one such place. Facilities for serving between twenty and twenty-four children make it possible to give individual attention to each child. It was one of the biggest thrills of my life to spend the day there talking to the director, a caseworker and the houseparents. I sensed the great warmth of these people, I felt a cozy quality in the place, I saw the look of security on so many of the children's faces. How differently my life might have been, I thought as I talked freely to one small boy and listened to his growing assurance, had there been such a place for me when I was his age. I went to visit the director at the Lake Bluff School for Children and I saw a girl who had at one time lived at Ridge Farm. She was leaving the school to go and live with foster parents. I saw how much he wanted to see

this girl, to say goodbye to her, to see how she felt about her new home. I saw the girl later, the way she ran to say goodbye. There was love here. This man cared what was going to happen to the girl who had once been in his family, so to speak. And the girl was filled with love. No doubt that same girl had been so disturbed when she first came to Ridge Farm that she could not express love because none had been given to her. And in a few short years everything had changed. In my ten years as a criminal and a convict I have known many men who were the products of orphanages, schools for bad boys, paid foster homes and I never saw a smile such as the one that girl gave to the director, and that told more eloquently the good his program accomplishes.

I didn't have the time to see much of the Lake Bluff School but I did talk to the director. Like the others, his quietly compelling personality came through and he convinced me that the day of the marching automaton is over in such children's homes. The importance of the part child welfare workers have played in this real war against juvenile delinquency—this preventive war—is relatively unheralded in comparison to the phony wars waged by politicians seeking office, but one whose results are far more beneficial.

A Plea for Greater Effort

In closing I would like to re-emphasize a few things. I know how disheartening it must be to spend time and energies, to spend your love, only to see children turn out not as you expected they might. I know how human it is to want results to come immediately or soon after. I want to tell you that in my case, for instance, the few people like you that I knew must have despaired when they learned that I had become worse, had gone from Juvenile Home to County Jail to prison after prison. But if it weren't for those few people along the way, what they did and said, I would not have had the courage to make the break, to realize that I was in need of help, to go voluntarily to a psychiatrist and to spend the years of painful review on the

couch that broke the pattern. So I say to you when you see the boy before you with the sneer inside, realize that this is his only protection. Know within yourself that what you may do will not bear immediate fruit, but keep on trying. All we can do is try. Perhaps

one of these days that boy will recall the way you looked, remember what you said and how you said it and know that somewhere there is someone like you who will help him in the way he needs it and he will begin the fight to drown his fears and accept it.

A BOARD MEMBER SPEAKS

A Board Redefines its Role While Resolving a Controversial Issue

A RECENT COURT contest in Wisconsin over the removal of a child from an adoptive home before the completion of the legal adoption, reminded us of a similar situation which occurred while I was president of the Children's Service Society of Wisconsin.* Several years ago, Children's Service Society placed a child in a home for the purpose of adoption. Six months later, the adoptive father died suddenly and unexpectedly. Following several interviews between our worker in the district in which the home was located and the adoptive mother, the joint decision was made that the mother could not adequately care for the child and therefore the child should be returned to the Society. Important among the many factors considered was the need of the child for both a mother and a father. This, too, had influenced the natural mother in her decision to release the child.

Before final plans were made for the adoptive mother to return the child, well-intentioned friends persuaded her that she should not suffer the loss of both her husband and child. They secured an attorney and a petition for adoption was filed. The agency, which had guardianship of the child, decided to withhold consent.

A number of community groups were aroused, including the Chamber of Commerce and Community Chest, and came to members of the District Advisory Board in behalf of the adoptive mother. The Board of Children's Service Society then participated with staff—the worker, supervisor and executive—in meeting with officials of these

community groups to discuss our thinking about the situation. In addition, the District Advisory Board held two special meetings to discuss the entire matter, its implications to the child, the adoptive mother, the natural mother and the community.

As a result of the considerations of the District Advisory Board, a recommendation was made to the Board of Directors that the decision of the staff be upheld. The Board of Directors then devoted an entire meeting to the attorney's request that consent to the adoption be given. Not only was this situation given serious thought but the function of Board and staff in all placements was considered. As a result of these deliberations the following resolution was passed:

WHEREAS, it is the general policy of the Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, Inc., that the rights and interests of children committed to its care shall be paramount, although the rights and interests of the parents or adopting parents of such children and of the Society shall be protected to the full extent possible under that general limitation; and

WHEREAS, except for general policy, the exercise of judgment in all individual cases must necessarily be committed to the professional staff of Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, Inc., has the utmost confidence in the professional staff of the Society and in the ability of the staff to exercise sound judgment in the handling of matters entrusted to them; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of Children's Service Society has reviewed in full detail all of the facts and circumstances involved in the matter of Consent for Adoption by of the child known as and has concluded to confirm the decision of staff that such Consent be withheld;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the actions of the members of the staff who have participated in the matter of in the City of are approved and confirmed.

* See "The Case of 'Baby Jeffry,' a Resume," *Wisconsin Welfare*, Vol. XIII, No. 2, p. 1.

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The adoptive mother received the decision well, in fact, agreed that it was the right one. Her willingness to participate in having the child placed again was immeasurably helpful to the little girl's future happiness.

As a result of this experience, the Board of Children's Service Society has seen its responsibility as setting broad general policies while professional staff makes decisions on individual situations. In June, 1954, the policies were revised to permit even more flexibility. Thus, the staff has a general directive but is free to consider each family individually to determine their potentialities as parents.

Perhaps the area of adoptions, above all others in the child welfare field, brings board and staff together and yet serves to define the responsibility of each. We, as board members, more clearly saw our role through this situation as representatives of the community in determining the framework of service. We also enlarged our respect for professional staff in their handling of individual situations.

S. LAWRENCE WHEELER,
*Formerly President, Children's Service Society,
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

Two Receive Mary E. Boretz Awards

The 1955 Mary E. Boretz First Award was received by Mrs. Frances Coffino, a caseworker on the staff of the Jewish Child Care Association of New York—the agency to which Mary Boretz gave so much leadership. The scroll and cash award of \$250 were presented at the League's Annual Dinner Meeting in San Francisco on June 2 for Mrs. Coffino's manuscript, "Development of a Foster Home." The Award Committee noted that the manuscript contains sound philosophy and demonstrates vividly the skill that needs to go into developing good foster parents.

The second award of \$150 was forwarded to Mary S. Brubaker, Supervisor with the Department of Public Welfare of Philadelphia for her manuscript, "Development in

Public Agency Service to Parents." The Award Committee felt that the manuscript had vitality and warmth, and that the discussion of the concern for the total family situation in the foster care of children would have special value for practitioners in the field.

The criteria, established by the Award Committee at the time of the Award's inception in 1951, stipulates that eligible manuscript must deal with subject matter in the field of child welfare, and be based on the writer's current or recent direct experience or research in the field; it should be timely and original in approach and be written clearly and effectively. This year seventeen papers were submitted from diverse sections of the country by persons active in the field of child welfare. The winning manuscripts were selected by a Committee of fourteen practitioners of long experience in the various child welfare services.

Mrs. Coffino's manuscript will be published as a pamphlet early this fall; Miss Brubaker's paper will appear in the October issue of CHILD WELFARE.

Interpretive Materials Awards Presented

The Second Annual "How To Do It Better" awards were presented to three of the six winning agencies at the Annual Dinner meeting in San Francisco, June 2. The selections were made from 181 entries submitted by 67 League member and provisional agencies on the basis of how well the pamphlet or brochure informed the public of the agency's program and services. The categories and recipients were:

Best Over-all Material—Minnesota State Department of Public Welfare, St. Paul, Minnesota.

"You are not Alone," an informative pamphlet giving services and resources for parents of retarded children.

"Manual for Houseparents," an attractively illustrated 57-page booklet outlining objectives and requirements of houseparents.

Best Foster Care Material—Children's Foster Care Services, Oakland, California.

"The Secure Child Becomes a Good Citizen," a picture story of the agency's foster care and consultation services for children.

Best Adoption Material—Child and Family Service, Inc., Norfolk, Va.

"Adoption Safeguards," a four-page folder, succinctly and attractively presenting facts on adoption for prospective adoptive parents.

Most Original Description of Agency Services—

Jewish Family and Children's Services, Boston, Massachusetts, for a blue and black brochure with attractive diagrams and charts outlining agency program and services.

Seattle Children's Home, Seattle, Washington, for a gold and black prospectus written as a diary of a boy's life at the Home.

The panel of judges, headed by Victor Weingarten, the League's Public Relations Consultant, consisted of Virginia Becker, Executive Director, National Publicity Council for Health and Welfare Services; Alexander L. Crosby, Expert on health and welfare interpretive materials; Wade Arnold, Executive Producer, National Broadcasting Company, and Edwin Leibert, Public Relations Consultant to Health and Welfare Agencies.

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NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Baby Sitters in Emergency Service

THE EMERGENCY baby sitter service was only one part of a program developed by the Connecticut Department of Public Welfare in Hartford to better fulfill its legal and traditional responsibility for emergency and short-term care of children. The cornerstone of this improved service was community and administrative concern over the welfare of children and recognition of the fact that many children can be best served by help to their parents.

For many years, the community supported a small institution located adjacent to the Municipal Hospital and Home for the Aged. Although under the administration of the Welfare Department, immediate direction of the children's home was carried by nursing staff. One untrained welfare worker was responsible for intake. Many of the children were admitted after office hours when a parent had to be hospitalized or when the police made a raid. Often children, admitted to the institution in the middle of the night, were returned to their families within a day or two if police charges against the parents did not result in prison or the family made other plans for the children. However, some children were in this institution for more than a year. The community's concern over the physical structure of the institution as well as over the quality of the services offered to children was relected in an early survey of community resources in the City of Hartford.

The first step in providing better service was the gradual recruitment of professional staff. After careful agency planning and discussion with other social agencies, it was decided to close the institution. A program of subsidized foster homes was developed. To implement this, however, it was necessary to plan for after office hour professional coverage. Always present was a very real concern over the trauma to children and their parents inherent in precipitous placement.

This service was reported by Margaret Jane Burnstein, formerly Child Welfare Supervisor, Department of Public Welfare, Hartford, Connecticut.

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"Why don't you get a baby sitter?" was a spontaneous question made by a staff member's husband when she was worrying about this problem one evening. A great deal of thoughtful consideration was given this suggestion and a beginning service was approved by administration.

Briefly the service was developed as follows: When an emergency occurred and children were involved, a child welfare worker was always on call through the switchboard of the Municipal Hospital. The worker could then consult by telephone with the involved doctor, parents, police and/or neighbors. A plan consistent with a professional evaluation of the total situation could then be made. The worker might decide to place the children in temporary foster homes but would always first question whether it would not be possible and preferable to get a neighbor or a relative or an emergency baby sitter to stay with the children.

If the baby sitter was used, it was always the worker who called the baby sitter and briefed her on what was known of the children and their needs, and enough of the current situation to enable her to meet the immediate problems and most important to answer the children's questions. It would usually be arranged that the baby sitter go to the home by taxi or police car. Furthermore, it was recognized as essential that the baby sitter always be able to communicate with the worker. This sometimes involved the active cooperation of police cruisers, as when Mrs. B, a newcomer to the community, was hospitalized in the middle of a night when her husband was out drinking and when there was no telephone in the apartment which housed five children all under 7 years of age. When necessary, the sitter was authorized to buy food for breakfast and to stay on the job until 10 a.m. At 8:30 the next morning a child welfare worker would be available to work closely with the parents, the children and appropriate community resources. As with the B children, it was unnecessary to actually place the children.

In order for the baby sitter service to be successful it was necessary to recruit warm, mature, responsible women for this work. A high flat rate of pay was decided upon with a good hourly rate to supplement this. The local Family Service Society Homemaker Service helped to refer prospective employees. Careful interviews were held with applicants and those chosen were paid for time spent in orientation. Baby sitters were then assigned for general supervision to a child welfare worker, as were parents, although it was recognized that other workers from time to time would be calling them. When the topic under discussion was pertinent, baby sitters were included in some of the monthly meetings of foster parents and also were invited to all child welfare social events. They were, in effect, recognized as an integral part of the Child Welfare Unit of the Hartford Department of Public Welfare.

Emergency baby sitter service was thus developed as an adjunct to but not a substitute for emergency coverage by trained social work personnel, adequate homemaker service, placement facilities, or family counseling.

This service made possible a workable transition from the "available institution" to the selective use of temporary foster homes and, although not used too frequently, it represented a valuable resource.

Development of this service from its inception through its presentation to administration and subsequent elaboration of detail represented a creative responsible approach and way of work in the child welfare field. It was an integral part of a total program that offered better service to children and their parents. Fewer children experienced the trauma of needless placement and family ties were consciously and professionally nurtured. At the same time the cost to the community was considerably decreased because it was obviously less expensive to provide trained worker coverage and baby sitter service than to maintain available beds in an institution.

READER'S FORUM

Integrated Service and the Problem of Differentiation

Dear Editor:

I have read with deep interest the articles on differentiated and undifferentiated caseloads appearing in *CHILD WELFARE* and would like to comment on them. For some of us who operate in an agency which is a consolidation of a family service agency and a children's service agency, previously existing as separate entities, the arguments over the subject, as with love and taxes, are not wholly based on reason. Indeed so much feeling is inherent in the subject that it is difficult for anyone to find a safe spot from which to survey the battlefield.

Mr. Leopold ("An Experience with Undifferentiated Caseloads," March, 1955) does a great service when he identifies the movement toward undifferentiated caseloads as an apparent concomitant of a "merger" and as the expression of "concern to unify the agency in all areas and levels of functioning." For each caseworker to carry a caseload representative of all services seems a relatively simple and effective way of achieving integration where it must be ultimately expressed; i.e. in service to the client. Unhappily for the proponents of this view, as illustrated by Mr. Leopold's own interesting agency experience, the agency is nevertheless, if unwillingly, forced to the recognition that there are two "wholes" to contend with. Mr. Leopold identifies them as "foster home placement" and "services to the family unit." With this comes the giving up of undifferentiated caseloads.

Miss Millar ("The Undifferentiated Caseload in a Merged Agency," June, 1955) acknowledges the differences felt in the field between these kinds of services but her examination of them leads her to the conviction that in actual practice the two are moving spontaneously together from a mutual recognition that the family is the unit with which each must work. On this common ground she constructs a setting whereby the unity of the

family and the unity of agency service is best maintained through the use of undifferentiated caseloads.

Regardless of one's identification with either of the two authors, both articles make it clear that the problem of differentiated versus undifferentiated caseload reflects an effort to make the merger or consolidation work. In its simplest terms one effort is to seek integration at the operational level of the caseworker through undifferentiated caseloads, the other is to seek it on an administrative level with differentiated caseloads. In actuality, of course, there must be in existence various measures in between these extremes. In my own multiple service agency, for example, we have something of each; i.e. some services are grouped together and rendered by one worker, others are separately offered by workers. We do not even think of it in the terms used by either writer.

True integration running all through the organization from board to worker is ultimately achieved when it has for its object the offering of the most skilled and efficient helping service of which the agency is capable. Using differentiated or undifferentiated caseloads as the means of integration is much too limited an approach. Integration, if achieved at all, will come only from: *first*, a frank and open working with all of the differences known, experienced, and felt, in the giving of different kinds of services whether these differences be around generic versus special skills, or foster home placement versus family counseling; *secondly*, the resolution of these differences must take place in terms of what goes into the helping process itself in relation to the client who seeks to use the service. Out of this difficult and often painful effort can come an integration which might well provide for the grouping of like services in an undifferentiated caseload and the use of differentiated caseloads in other areas. The actual arrangement will depend upon the range of the agency's functions and its own understanding of the likeness and differences of the helping process in these areas of service.

On a related subject, I do wish social workers could get together on the words *merger*

and *consolidation*. Very different things come together in consolidation. B, this is a

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Vol. XXIV,

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and *consolidation*. Their precise meaning is very different. If Agency A and Agency B come together to form Agency C, this is a *consolidation*. If A and B become either A or B, this is a *merger*.

C. WILSON ANDERSON

*Executive Director, Family and Children's Service,
Minneapolis, Minn.*

BOOK NOTES

Learning Through Supervision, Annette Garrett,
Smith College Studies in Social Work, February 1954.
Vol. XXIV, No. 2. 109 pp., \$2.00

This book meets a real need in the field of supervision, particularly school-agency relationships in the area of supervision. Although it is not written in textbook style, its content makes it a practical manual for faculty advisors, or as the author prefers to call them, faculty-supervisors.

The book is built around the unity of a student training program, with emphasis on the field work experience as part of the school's over-all program. This training is goal-directed in that its purpose is to enable the student ultimately to give good casework service, but the responsibility of the school and the role of the school supervisor constitute the main theme of the book. Miss Garrett's assumption of the school's responsibility is expressed as follows:

In a complementary way field work that is to provide the most significant practice must continue and extend the learning that characterizes the academic setting. . . . [The Faculty-Advisor] more than anyone else, knows the developmental needs of the student, the educational aims of the school, and the potential contribution of the particular agency and the particular agency's supervision. She stimulates both the student and the agency's personnel in a way which brings about the continuing progress of the student toward professional achievement.

Miss Garrett makes a needed contribution toward defining the faculty-supervisor's job in a direct teaching style of writing, and with great clarity she gives the purpose and content of conferences between faculty-supervisor and agency-supervisor and between faculty-supervisor and student. She defines areas of responsibility and indicates limits.

This is helpful and important because there has been uncertainty as to the content of the faculty-supervisor's job ever since the need was recognized for a faculty position in which a faculty member would also relate directly to the student in her field work progress. Some advisors have interpreted this position as primarily to act as advisor to the student, particularly if difficulties arise, and to consult periodically with the agency-supervisor as to the student's progress. Miss Garrett assigns much more responsibility than this to the faculty-supervisor and describes a job which is a combination of guide and counselor with a touch of therapist. She develops this interpretation with consummate skill as she builds up the picture of the faculty-supervisor's activities and supports this with interpretations of purpose and philosophy.

From the point of view of the agency-supervisor I wonder if Miss Garrett underplays the sharing quality of the relationship between faculty-supervisor and agency-supervisor and unintentionally over-stresses the role of the faculty-supervisor, making her appear to be a kind of "super-supervisor" or a supervisor of the agency-supervisor. Miss Garrett specifically states that she does not intend this to be so. She says "The faculty-supervisor must get her satisfaction from the fact that she, . . . is doing her best job when the agency-supervisor-student relationship is most meaningful." Because Miss Garrett is writing from the point of view of the school with awareness of its responsibility for the student's entire training experience, she does place on the faculty-supervisor an overall responsibility which carries a suggestion of control. I wondered just where the agency-supervisor is in this? Does she not carry responsibility also for helping the student sort out reality from projection? Also Miss Garrett does not mention that student's projections sometimes go the other way. The student may see her agency-supervisor as being all wise and helpful while she projects her fears and inadequacies on the school. Miss Garrett's clarification of the role of the faculty-supervisor in this area is good. However, it is most important that the use of the

faculty advisor's role be carefully defined and disciplined.

Miss Garrett demonstrates so clearly the use and value of field work and the necessity of the one-to-one relationship of student and supervisor that one wonders whether part of her purpose in writing the book was to answer those who recently have criticized the "tutorial" system. She shows how knowledge gained intellectually must be integrated with emotional growth and self-understanding. She illustrates that this cannot come about through teaching alone but grows out of the meaningful relationship between student and supervisor and the latter's individualized knowledge of the student.

Having first discussed the training experience from the point of view of the faculty-supervisor, Miss Garrett then picks up the same theme from the student's point of view. She accomplishes this by including much verbatim material from a student's own monthly reports. These excerpts are valuable and enlightening and contain many thoughts which all supervisors can profit by reading.

The student's report is so helpful in understanding a student's learning process that one wonders whether use of a similar device might not be tried out even where field work and class work are concurrent and where the faculty-supervisor is more readily available than in the Smith College Plan. Miss Garrett also speaks of the value of the agency-supervisors giving written monthly reports.

Miss Garrett throws in a plug for the plan of block field work. Her outline in this book is based on the faculty-supervisor's job in the

Smith College program—covering fall visit, winter visit, spring visit, with discussion of the correlation between the field work periods alternating with solid periods of class work. This is a book which will be thought-provoking and informative for all student-supervisors and faculty-advisors of any school. For example, the discussion of record reading by the faculty-supervisor, and of a student's emotional problems and use of therapy, are but a couple of the generic problems of school-agency field work supervision which she discusses helpfully.

It demonstrates the sound theory on which Miss Garrett's teaching is based, for the reader feels throughout that her aim is to teach that:

[The faculty-supervisor] ultimate satisfaction comes when she is least needed as the graduating student goes forth well launched toward professional maturity with the foundations laid for her eventually assuming a supervisory role with others.

(MRS.) MARGARET W. MILLAR

*Director of Casework, Family & Children's Service
of Greater St. Louis, Mo.*

How They Were Reached, A Study of 310 Children and Their Families Known to Referral Units, New York City Youth Board, Monograph No. 2. New York, 1954. 115 pp., \$1.00.

The second in a series of monographs dealing with a large scale community effort for control and prevention of unsocial behavior among young people through encouraging resistive families to accept needed help.

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